Banning maize exports

1261. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to ban maize exports;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The expected production of maize in India this year should suffice to meet the domestic and export demand. The domestic prices are under control and exports that are a small fraction of production are unlikely to raise the domestic prices significantly. Hence, in the interest of maize farmers, the Government has decided, not to ban maize exports for time being.

Scams in STCs

1262. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has unearthed scams in State Trading Corporation of India (STC) during the last three years;

(b) if so, the details thereof, year-wise;

(c) the action taken so far; and

(d) what steps Government is taking to strengthen the STCs especially in Andhra Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) to (c) There are two cases in STC, in the last three years, which are being investigated by Central Bureau of Investigation. These are (i) Regarding financial assistance extended by STC to M/S Metro Machinery Traders (MMT) and M/s AG Agro Pvt. Limited (AGAPL) and (ii) Regarding import of pulses by STC.

(d) Presently STC has a Branch Office at Hyderabad and the existing strength is 14 managers and 17 staff. Besides this, there is a sub-branch office at Guntur under Hyderabad Branch having a strength of 1 manager and 10 staff. As per the existing volume of business activities at both the offices in Andhra Pradesh, the present working strength is considered to be adequate. However, as and when there is increase in the business activities in the Andhra region, further steps will be taken to strengthen the manpower at Andhra Pradesh based on requirement of Hyderabad Branch.

Purchase of Lockheed Aircrafts from USA

1263. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government has decided to purchase Lockheed Aircrafts from USA:

(b) if so, the details of the agreement signed with the United States with the value of deal

(c) whether India is also considering buying US equipment for army; and

(d) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) and (b) The Government has signed a Letter of Offer and Acceptance with the US Government for the procurement of six C-130J-30 aircraft for the Indian Air Force The estimated value of the aircraft along with associated ground support equipment, ground handling equipment and the role equipment is 962,454,677 USD.

(c) and (d) A Letter of Offer and Acceptance has also been signed with the US Government for procurement of weapons and equipment for the Special Forces of the Army.

Vacation of airwaves for private mobile service providers

1264. SHRI P.R. RAJAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the private mobile service providers have approached the Army to vacate airwaves for offering high speed service; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the response of the Ministry to this request?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) and (b) No private agency providing mobile services has approached Army to vacate airwaves for offering high speed services. Wireless Planning and Coordination Wing (WPC) in Ministry of Communication and Information Technology is the agency concerned for this purpose.

Fire in vehicle factory at Jabalpur

†1265. MISS ANUSUIYA UIKEY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that an incident of fire in vehicle factory at Jabalpur Madhya Pradesh has come to light;

(b) the number of incidents of fire during last three years,

(c) the equipments which have been destroyed in these fire incidents alongwith their cost;

(d) reasons of fire and whether these incidents of fire occurred due to carelessness of the responsible persons; and

(e) action being taken by Government and Management of the factory to prevent such type of incidents of fire in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir. An incident of fire had occured in Vehicle Factory, Jabalpur on 13th April, 2004.

(b) No other major incident of fire has occurred in Vehicle Factory, Jabalpur during the last three years.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.